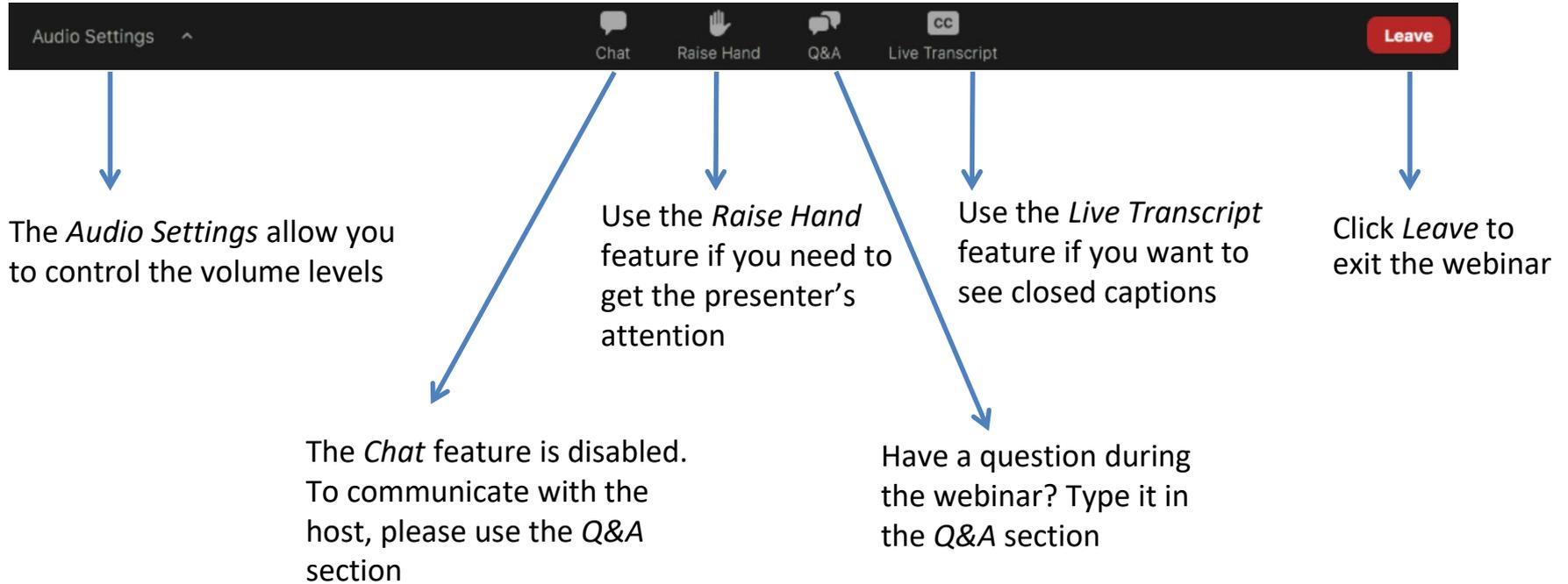




*mefa*<sup>®</sup>

# College Admissions

# How to Participate in This Webinar



## About MEFA



Not-for-profit state authority created in 1982  
helping families plan, save, and pay for college

# Webinar Topics

- Current trends
- Your college list
- Campus visits
- The application process
- Financial aid
- Free resources



# Trends in College Admissions

- Earlier Process
- Students applying to a greater number of schools
- Demonstrated interest a factor
- Has become more a parent-driven process (though students should be driving!)
- Rise of social media
- Cost has become a bigger factor



# Stay Organized!

Use a system to keep track of applications and deadlines, such as MEFA's College Application Manager:

College Application Manager					
As you explore schools and build your college list, keep track of your details here. Remember that deadlines are critical when applying to college and requesting financial aid, so set yourself reminders to ensure you submit all applications on time. If you're applying to more than ten schools, make a copy of this chart.					
School Name	Admissions Deadline*	Send SAT, ACT, or Neither	Required Financial Aid	Financial Aid Deadline*	Notes
1. Example University	November 1st	SAT	FAFSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	February 1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High school visit: Oct 1st</li> <li>Strong nursing program</li> <li>4-hour drive away</li> </ul>
2.			FAFSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
3.			FAFSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
4.			FAFSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CSS Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		

[mefa.org/college-application-manager](https://mefa.org/college-application-manager)

# Researching Colleges

## Research thoroughly

**College Navigator:** [CollegeNavigator.gov](https://collegenavigator.gov)

College search with admissions, academic, & cost info

**College Scorecard:** [CollegeScorecard.ed.gov](https://collegescorecard.ed.gov)

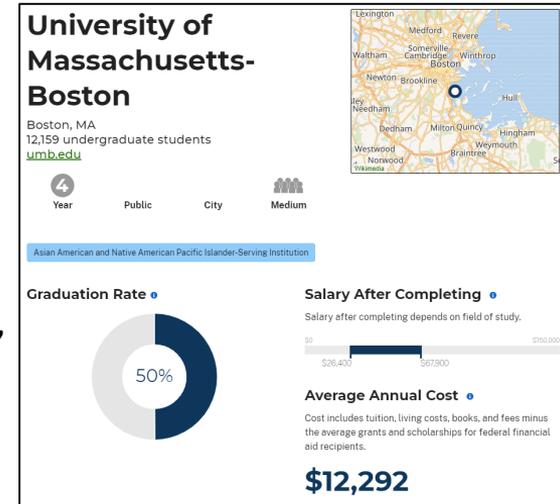
College info including average net price, student debt, grad rate, & alumni salary

**Big Future:** [bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search)

College search with info on academics, applying, & paying

**MEFA Pathway:** [mefapathway.org](https://mefapathway.org)

College search and matching tool based on preferences



# College Factors to Consider



# Informal & Formal Campus Visits

## Informal visits

- Size
- Setting
- Culture



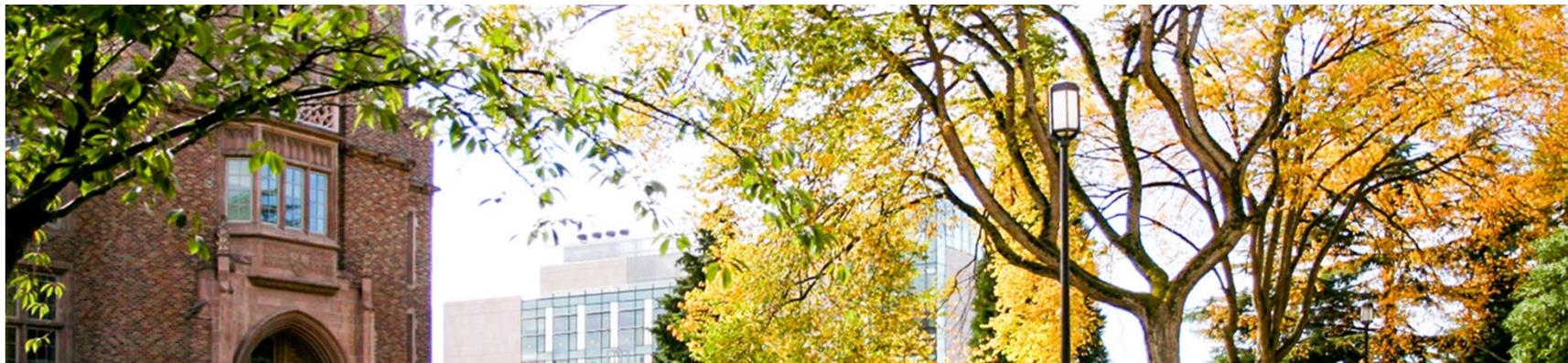
## Formal visits

- Academics
- Activities
- Housing
- Q&A



# College Fair Tips

\*NACAC is holding virtual college fairs Sept – Nov 2021: [nacacfairs.org/virtual/](https://nacacfairs.org/virtual/)



- Sign up
- Check out the college list beforehand
- Have a plan of attack before you start
- Take advantage of information sessions
- Schedule 1-on-1 meetings with colleges if available

# Assess Prospects for Admission

Develop a final list with colleges of each type:

## Probable

Your chances for admission are strong (Make sure at least one is affordable)

## Target

Your chances for admission are 50/50

## Reach

Your chances for admission are less than 50%

# College Application Types



- **Regular Decision:** Usually an early Jan deadline
- **Early Action:** Deadlines in Nov & Dec, non-binding agreement
- **Early Decision:** Deadlines in Nov & Dec, binding agreement
- **Rolling Admission:** Decisions on a rolling basis, Nov-May
- **Open Admission:** Admits most students for most programs anytime

# College Application Forms & Components

Application requirements may vary at each college

## **College Application Forms:**

- Common App  
[CommonApp.org](https://CommonApp.org)
- Universal College App  
[UniversalCollegeApp.com](https://UniversalCollegeApp.com)
- Coalition App  
[CoalitionForCollegeAccess.org](https://CoalitionForCollegeAccess.org)
- College website application
- Paper app

## **Your application may include:**

- Application form
- High school transcript
- Standardized test scores
- Letters of recommendation
- Activity list or resume
- Personal essay
- Interview
- Audition
- Portfolio

# Academic Readiness



- Rigor
- Good grades vs. challenging classes
- Improvement over time
- Exceeding minimum requirements
- Relevance to college plans
- Sliding scale for MA public colleges & universities

# Standardized Tests

\*Some colleges may not require standardized tests for those applying for Fall 2022 admission

<b>PSAT</b>	Offers practice and assessment
<b>SAT</b>	Measures college readiness Offers free test prep online
<b>ACT</b>	Measures college readiness Offers free test prep online
<b>AP Exam</b>	Shows subject knowledge

- Register at:
- [act.org](https://act.org) (for the ACT)
  - [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org) (for the PSAT & SAT)
  - [apstudents.collegeboard.org](https://apstudents.collegeboard.org) (for AP exams)

[Fairtest.org](https://fairtest.org) provides a list of over 1,600 test-optional schools

# Activity List & Resume

- Extracurricular activities
- Showcase what you do and the depth of the activity
- Include family responsibilities and employment
- Highlight the impact on your community



# Essays



- Your application essay says a lot about you
- Share something meaningful and personal
- Start writing early
- Try different topics and approaches
- Plagiarism is taken very seriously
- Leave time for careful proof-reading

# Common App Essay Prompts for Fall 2022 Admission

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

# Letters of Recommendation



Adults who know you well can offer a helpful perspective on your strengths

- What are your high school guidelines?
- Whom to ask?
- When to ask?
- Say thank you!

# Interviews

A face-to-face conversation lets colleges see the person behind the numbers

- Only offered at a small number of schools
- Two types: Informational and Evaluative
- Be prepared to answer open-ended questions
- Know your reasons for applying to the college
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Cover the basics
- Relax and be yourself



# The Admissions Decision

<b>Admitted</b>	Student is accepted Student may also be accepted to begin at a later semester
<b>Deferred</b>	Student is not accepted Early Action/Decision but will be considered in the regular applicant pool
<b>Denied</b>	Student is not accepted
<b>Waitlisted</b>	Student is not yet accepted and may not get accepted off the waitlist

- Most colleges send decisions over email or post to their online portal
- Deposit by deadline (usually May 1<sup>st</sup>) to secure your spot at a school

# Understanding College Affordability



- What is the Cost of Attendance and Net Price?
- What financial aid applications are required and when?
- Need-based aid vs. merit-based aid: potentially different deadlines
- Start looking for private scholarships now

# Net Price Calculators

- Online tool found on each college's website
- Asks questions about family finances & student academics
- Provides personal, estimated net college price
- Displays federal & institutional financial aid
- Merit-based aid may also be calculated



# Applying for Financial Aid

## Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®):

- Required by every college and university
- 2022-23 FAFSA available Oct 1, 2021
- Will ask about 2020 income

## CSS Profile™:

- Required by 250+ colleges and scholarship agencies
- 2022-23 Profile available Oct 1, 2021
- Will ask about 2020 income

## College-specific financial aid applications

- Posted on each college's financial aid website

The screenshot shows the Federal Student Aid website. At the top, it says "Federal Student Aid" and "PRINCIPAL SPONSOR OF THE AMERICAN BUDGET". There are navigation links for "UNDERSTAND AID", "APPLY FOR AID", and "COMPLETE AID PROCESS". The main content area has a dark blue background with the text "Complete the FAFSA® Form" and "New To The FAFSA® Process? Completing the FAFSA form is free. Fill it out now." with a "Start Here" button. Below that, it says "Use the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form to apply for financial aid for college or graduate school." and "Returning User? Correct info | Add a school View your Student Aid Report (SAR) Log In".

The screenshot shows the CSS Profile website. At the top, it says "CSS Profile" and has navigation links for "Home", "Getting Started", "Fee Waivers", "Divorced or Separated Families", and "International Applicants". The main content area has a purple background with a photo of two women talking. The text says "Apply with CSS Profile" and "Each year CSS Profile gives access to more than \$9 billion for thousands of undergraduate, graduate and professional students." with a "Sign In to Fall 2021/Spring 2022" button. At the bottom, there are three icons with text: "Check participating Schools and Scholarships", "Learn how to apply", and "Completing the CSS Profile for the Noncustodial Parent".

# Paying for College in MA: You Have Options

## MassTransfer

- Makes transfer from community college to a 4-year public MA college more affordable
- Benefits include guaranteed credit transfer, tuition credit, & freeze on tuition
- [mass.edu/masstransfer](https://mass.edu/masstransfer)



## Tuition Break

- Reduction on out-of-state tuition costs at New England schools for certain programs
- [Nebhe.org/programs-overview/rsp-tuitionbreak/overview](https://Nebhe.org/programs-overview/rsp-tuitionbreak/overview)



# Staying on Track Through Senior Year

## Spring/Summer Junior Year

- Research colleges
- Visit campuses & college fairs
- Ask teachers for letters of recommendation
- Take the SAT/ACT
- Start writing the college essay

## Fall Senior Year

- Retake the SAT/ACT
- Secure letters of recommendation
- Finalize the college essay(s)
- Attend MEFA's *College Financing* webinar
- Complete all admissions applications
- Submit financial aid applications

## Winter Senior Year

- Submit admissions applications
- Submit financial aid applications
- Apply for private scholarships
- Send in mid-year grade reports

## Spring Senior Year

- Receive admissions and financial aid offers
- Attend MEFA's *After the College Acceptance* webinar
- Attend college open house programs
- Choose your college by May 1<sup>st</sup>

View an extended timeline at: [mefa.org/college-admissions-and-financial-aid-timeline](https://mefa.org/college-admissions-and-financial-aid-timeline)

# MEFA Pathway *Your Plan for the Future*

FREE college and career planning tool

Resources include:

- Skills and interests assessments
- Career exploration
- College search
- Financial aid and scholarship information
- Personalized digital portfolio
- Visit [mefapathway.org](https://mefapathway.org) to get started



**mefa**  
**pathway** YOUR PLAN  
FOR THE FUTURE®

# What You Can Do Now

- Sign up for MEFA webinars at [mefa.org/events](https://mefa.org/events)
- Research colleges
- Start creating your college list



## MEFA Events

We offer free informative webinars and virtual community events on a range of topics. To register for an upcoming webinar, click a topic below. To view a recorded webinar, please view our [MEFA Videos](#) page.

# Connect with MEFA on Social Media



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[youtube.com/MEFAcounselor](https://youtube.com/MEFAcounselor)

Thank You

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# Questions?

(800) 449-MEFA (6332)

[collegeplanning@mefa.org](mailto:collegeplanning@mefa.org)